

SENATOR MAXEY: My bill, LB 389, is known as the displaced homemaker bill. It will bring the focus on identification and outreach, including job training and referral services for women who have served, without pay, the best years of their lives and they are forced, by various reasons, to earn a living. These are women who have fulfilled a role as homemaker, who find themselves displaced in their middle years through divorce, widowhood or loss of family income. They are ineligible for ADC if their children are over 18. They are subject to the highest unemployment rate of any sector of the work force. They face discrimination in employment because they are women, older and have no previous paid work experience. They are ineligible for unemployment insurance because they have not been engaged in any job training. They are ineligible for social security because they are too young.

Some will never be eligible because they are divorced and fall through the cracks of the social security system. Many lose medical coverage and are unable to secure private health insurance plans. An exact figure is hard to find because homemakers don't often appear in government statistics. Since their economic contribution is not recognized and they have received no benefits, their status is officially ignored. Rough estimates on the number who fit into this area are from one to three million people. The changing status of the family has caught older women unprotected. The divorce rate has doubled. There has been an increase of 46 percent in the number of household heads by women in the last ten years. One-fourth of the divorces are filed after 15 years of marriage. The trend is toward a no fault dissolution of marriage and support for limited periods, if at all. An increasing number of older women live without men. There are more than four times as many widows as there are widowers. The older a woman becomes the more likely they are to be on their own. Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that LB 389 be advanced to E & R initial.

PRESIDENT: Senator Cullan.

SENATOR CULLAN: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature. Senator Maxey, would you yield for a few questions?

SENATOR MAXEY: Yes, I will.

SENATOR CULLAN: Are there any other manpower training programs which is kind of what this really is, if I understand it correctly, or any other educational programs of any type which could engage in providing similar services to women in these age groups?

SENATOR MAXEY: Yes, there is, but the point is identification. We do not plan on duplicating any of the organizations or groups that are doing these services. They need identification, job training, and their age is a factor. So they are unidentified. We're not creating new programs for them. They are going to be channeled into existing programs.

SENATOR CULLAN: If we're not creating new programs where exactly is the \$97,000 that you're talking about going to go?

SENATOR MAXEY: It goes to two centers. One center, which will be in Omaha. These centers are for identification, re-training and putting people into the positions and openings that are available. We need the centers for identification of the women.